NUMB. XXI.

The GUARDIAN.

——— *Fungar inani*
Munere ——— Virg.

Saturday, April 4. 1713.

DR. *Tillotſon*, in his Diſcourſe concerning *the Danger of all known Sin, both from the Light of Nature and Revelation*, after having given us the Deſcription of the Laſt Day out of Holy Writ, has this remarkable Paſſage.

'I appeal to any Man, whether this be not a Re-'preſentation of things very proper and ſuitable to 'that *Great Day*, wherein he who made the World 'ſhall come to judge it? And whether the Wit of 'Man ever deviſed any thing ſo awful, and ſo 'agreeable to the Majeſty of God, and the ſolemn 'Judgment of the whole World? The Deſcription 'which *Virgil* makes of the *Eliſian Fields*, and *the* 'Infernal Regions, how infinitely do they fall ſhort 'of the Majeſty of the Holy Scripture, and the De-'ſcription there made of *Heaven* and *Hell*, and 'of *the Great and Terrible Day of the Lord*! So 'that in Compariſon they are childiſh and trifling; 'and yet perhaps he had the moſt regular and moſt 'govern'd Imagination of any Man that ever lived, 'and obſerved the greateſt Decorum in his Cha-'racters and Deſcriptions. But who can declare *the* 'great things of God, but *he to whom God ſhall re-*'veal them!

This Obſervation was worthy a moſt Polite Man, and ought to be of Authority with all who are ſuch, ſo far as to examine whether he ſpoke that as a Man of a juſt Taſte and Judgment, or advanced it meerly for the Service of his Doctrine as a Clergyman.

I am very confident whoever reads the Goſpels, with an Heart as much prepared in Favour of them as when he ſits down to *Virgil* or *Homer*, will find no Paſſage there which is not told with more natural Force than any Epiſode in either of thoſe Wits, who were the Chief of mere Mankind.

The laſt thing I read was the 24th Chapter of St. *Luke*, which gives an Account of the Manner in which our Bleſſed Saviour, after his Reſurrection, joined with two Diſciples on the Way to *Emmaus* as an ordinary Traveller, and took the Privilege as ſuch to enquire of them what occaſioned a Sadneſs he obſerved in their Countenances, or whether it was from any Publick Cauſe? Their Wonder that any Man ſo near *Jeruſalem* ſhould be a Stranger to what had paſſed there; their Acknowledgment to one they met accidently that they had believed in this Prophet; and that now, the Third Day after his Death, they were in Doubt as to their pleaſing Hope, which occaſioned the Heavineſs he took Notice of, are all repreſented in a Stile which Men of Letters call *the Great and Noble Simplicity*. The Attention of the Diſciples, when he expounded the Scriptures concerning himſelf, his offering to take his Leave of them, their Fondneſs of his Stay, and the Manifeſtation of the great Gueſt whom they had entertained while he was yet at Meat with them, are all Incidents which wonderfully pleaſe the Imagination of a Chriſtian Reader; and give to him ſomething of that Touch of Mind which the Brethren felt, when they ſaid one to another, *Did not our Hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the Way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures*?

I am very far from pretending to treat theſe Matters as they deſerve; but I hope thoſe Gentlemen who are qualified for it, and called to it, will forgive me, and conſider that I ſpeak as a meer Secular Man, impartially conſidering the Effect which the Sacred Writings will have upon the Soul of an intelligent Reader; and it is ſome Argument, that a thing is the immediate Work of God, when it ſo infinitely tranſcends all the Labours of Man. When I look upon *Raphael*'s Picture of our Saviour appearing to his Diſciples after his Reſurrection, I cannot

(Price Two Pence.)

cannot but think the juſt Diſpoſition of that Piece has in it the Force of many Volumes on the Subject: The Evangeliſts are eaſily diſtinguiſhed from the reſt by a paſſionate Zeal and Love which the Painter has thrown in their Faces; the Huddle Group of thoſe who ſtand moſt diſtant are admirable Repreſentations of Men aſhamed with their late Unbelief and Hardneſs of Heart. And ſuch Endeavours, as this of *Raphael*, and of all Men not called to the Altar, are Collateral Helps not to be deſpiſed by the Miniſters of the Goſpel.

'Tis with this View that I preſume upon Subjects of this Kind; and Men may take up this Paper, and be catched by an Admonition under the Diſguiſe of a Diverſion.

All the Arts and Sciences ought to be employed in one Confederacy againſt the prevailing Torrent of Vice and Impiety; and it will be no ſmall Step in the Progreſs of Religion, if it was as evident as it ought to be, that he wants the beſt Taſte and beſt Senſe a Man can have, who is cold to the *Beauty of Holineſs*.

As for my part, when I have happened to attend the Corps of a Friend to his Interment, and have ſeen a graceful Man at the Entrance of a Church-yard, who became the Dignity of his Function, and aſſumed an Authority which is natural to Truth, pronounce *I am the Reſurrection and the Life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live; and whoſoever liveth and believeth in me, ſhall never die*: I ſay, upon ſuch an Occaſion, the Retroſpect upon paſt Actions between the Deceaſed whom I followed and my ſelf, together with the many little Circumſtances that ſtrike upon the Soul, and alternately give Grief and Conſolation, have vaniſhed like a Dream; and I have been relieved as by a Voice from Heaven, when the Solemnity has proceeded, and after a long Pauſe I again heard the Servant of God utter, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter Day upon the Earth; and though Worms deſtroy this Body, yet in my Fleſh ſhall I ſee God; whom I ſhall ſee for my ſelf, and my Eyes ſhall behold, and not another.* How have I been raiſed above this World and all its regards, and how well prepared to receive the next Sentence which the holy Man has ſpoken, *We brought nothing into this World, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the Name of the Lord?*

There are I know Men of heavy Temper without Genius, who can read theſe Expreſſions of Scripture with as much indifference as they do the reſt of theſe looſe Papers: However, I will not deſpair but to bring Men of Wit into a Love and Admiration of Sacred Writings; and, as old as I am, I promiſe my ſelf to ſee the Day when it ſhall be as much the Faſhion among Men of Politeneſs to admire a Rapture of St. *Paul*, as any fine Expreſſion in *Virgil* or *Horace*; and to ſee a well-dreſſed young Man produce an Evangeliſt out of his Pocket, and be no more out of Countenance than if it were a Claſſick Printed by *Elzevir*.

It is a Gratitude that ought to be paid to Providence by Men of diſtinguiſhed Faculties, to praiſe and adore the Author of their Being with a Spirit ſuitable to thoſe Faculties, and rouze ſlower Men by their Words, Actions and Writings to a Participation of their Tranſports and Thankſgivings.

This Paper is to be had of Mr. Yemes *under the* Thatch'd-houſe *Tavern in St.* James's-ſtreet; *Mrs.* Bond *at* Charing-croſs; *Mrs.* Bolter *near the* Temple-gate; *and Mr.* Round *in* Exchange-Alley.

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